Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 1999-2000

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development

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Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Lynda Haverstock
Lieutenant-Governor
Province of Saskatchewan

May it please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000.

Janice MacKinnon
Minister of Economic and
Co-operative Development

The Honourable Janice MacKinnon
Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development

Dear Madam:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Spannier
Deputy Minister

The Saskatchewan Economy

Saskatchewan's economy experienced exceptional growth during the period 1992-98. Over that period, the province's economy grew at an average rate of 3.6 per cent per year, the second highest in Canada.

Employment in 1999 reached 480,100 – an increase of 3,800 from 1998 and 31,600 from 1992. The economy exceeded the government's target, set in 1992, of creating 30,000 new jobs by the year 2000. Unemployment dropped from 7.9 per cent in 1992 to 6.1 percent in 1999.

In 1999, the effects of the Asian "flu" and falling commodity prices dampened the prospects for Saskatchewan's economy. However, with its diversified economic base, the provincial economy still grew by 3.0 per cent in 1999, as estimated by the Department of Finance.

Saskatchewan's population, as of July 1, 1999, was estimated at 1,025,720, up by 812 from July 1, 1998. Since 1992, the province's population has increased by more than two per cent. This increase in population can be attributed to a positive natural rate of population growth (births minus deaths) and a declining rate of net inter-provincial migration (the number of people leaving the province versus the number moving to the province).

Saskatchewan is an exporting province. In 1999, Saskatchewan's total exports of goods abroad continued to show strong results, despite the weakness in agriculture commodity prices and the associated weaknesses in food products and agriculture machinery industries. Exports totaled $9.8 billion in 1999. Although crude oil prices remained low for part of the year, oil and gas industries, along with mining and manufacturing industries, led the way in the export of goods abroad.

Saskatchewan's manufacturing sector is a valuable contributor to the provincial economy. The sector's output in 1999 totaled $6.1 billion, an increase of 3.7 per cent compared to 1998. Shipments of the following industries reported particularly strong results in 1999: electrical products, wood products, metal fabrication industries, and chemical and chemical products industries.

Retail sales remained strong in 1999, exceeding $7.7 billion, an increase of 1.5 per cent over 1998. Consumer spending on goods, such as general merchandise, household furniture, clothing and other retail goods showed considerable strength. This strong showing could partially be attributed to a reduction in March 1999 of the provincial sales tax from seven per cent to six per cent.

In 1999, the value of building permits issued in Saskatchewan totaled $721.6 million – an increase of 7.2 per cent over the level issued in 1998. This growth can be attributed to a 39.5 per cent rise in the value of institutional and government building permits, a 2.4 per cent rise in the value of commercial permits and a 1.7 per cent rise in the value of residential building permits.

Urban housing starts in 1999 grew by 2.2 per cent, to 2,189 units, compared to 1998. Growth in 1999 was not limited to the two major urban centres. Smaller urban centres also showed increases in housing compared to 1998.

Private and public capital expenditures for 1999 totaled $6.8 billion, a 2.6 per cent increase over 1998 totals and the second highest level in the province's history (behind the 1997 total of $7.4 billion); and over $2.8 billion more than in 1992.

Most independent forecasters expected Saskatchewan's economy to show further growth in 2000 and beyond, in part due to major projects like the Alliance Pipeline project and the gradual recovery of the global economy and non-agricultural commodity prices. In Summer 2000 the Conference Board of Canada anticipated Saskatchewan's economy would grow by 3.2 per cent in 2000 and 2.3 per cent in 2001.

Department Overview

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development has as its corporate vision an innovative, prosperous and sustainable Saskatchewan economy with full participation. During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the department worked with its broad and diverse range of economic partners to attempt to fulfil that vision.

The department had four broad corporate goals in 1999-2000. These goals were to obtain:

- a growing economy that is led by innovative, knowledge-based and value-added industries that are export oriented;
- a full-employment, full-participation society;
- a high quality life in which economic prosperity and social well-being are linked; and
- a positive attitude about economic development opportunities in Saskatchewan.

The major reorganization of the previous fiscal year resulted in a department with more focused resources on regional delivery of service to clients, and on innovation, co-operatives, and community and regional economic development. The organizational structure remained basically unchanged throughout the year, with more attention being added to the Business Development Unit, Information Technology Office and Policy Division to enable the department to better meet its strategic objectives.

A major focus of department activity during the fiscal year was the preparation of a new economic strategy for the province. Department staff did extensive work with colleagues across government in analyzing the economic challenges facing Saskatchewan and identifying growth opportunities in key economic sectors. Staff held preliminary consultations with key business, labour, co-operative, community and Aboriginal organizations to help develop a document to guide broader public discussions planned for the fall of 2000.

Co-operative development continued to be a priority of the department. During the fiscal year, legislation was proclaimed allowing for the establishment of new generation co-operatives. These co-operatives adhere to traditional co-operative principles and practices, but have a structure that enables them to access non-member capital and issue non par value shares. This new co-operative model has the potential to greatly increase value-added processing activity, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

The province's forestry sector made headlines during 1999-2000, as a result of work by the department, industry, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and the Office of Northern Affairs. New forest management legislation set the stage for announcement of a major expansion of the province's forest industry. Government and industry announced in April 2000 that 12 projects planned or under construction will effectively double the industry's size, creating 10,000 direct and indirect jobs over the new few years and injecting more than half a billion dollars of private sector investment into new developments.

During the reporting period, the department took steps to strengthen Saskatchewan's research and development infrastructure. It represented the government's interests on the Canadian Light Source (CLS) synchrotron project, and construction began on the football-field-size facility on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan. As well, the government announced in its 2000 Budget the establishment of a $10-million Innovation and Science Fund to renew and build the research infrastructure at the province's universities and research institutions and also lever major new federal research spending in Saskatchewan. The fund will be housed in the department and will be the main source of provincial matching funds for projects seeking support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI).

Other department highlights in 1999-2000 included:

- making more than $19 million in commitments under the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) to 14 projects covering such diverse activities as a training centre for the apparel and textile industry and an international test centre for carbon dioxide research.
- providing more than $5.9 million in support under the Strategic Initiatives Fund to research projects that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities.
- partnering with Saskatchewan Health and the Medical Research Council of Canada on a five-year, $10-million program to boost health research in the province.
- successfully marketing and implementing the pilot Provincial Nominee Program, nominating 24 skilled workers and three business applicants during the year.
- co-hosting the *"Building the New Saskatchewan"* New Generation Co-operatives conference, which attracted over 150 speakers and participants from across Canada and the United States.
- enhancing the Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) Program to double both the maximum loan advance to eligible businesses and the maximum interest-free revolving line of credit to SBLAs.
- co-ordinating the *Connectivity* conference, which brought together for the first time in one meeting representatives from Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs), Community Futures Development Corporations, and the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association.
- co-ordinating supplier meetings and opportunities for Saskatchewan businesses around both the Canadian Light Source synchrotron and the NATO Flying Training in Canada projects.
- successfully co-ordinating the government's Year 2000 (Y2K) preparedness.
- developing a targeted marketing campaign profiling the province's forestry, advanced technology and agri-value sectors.

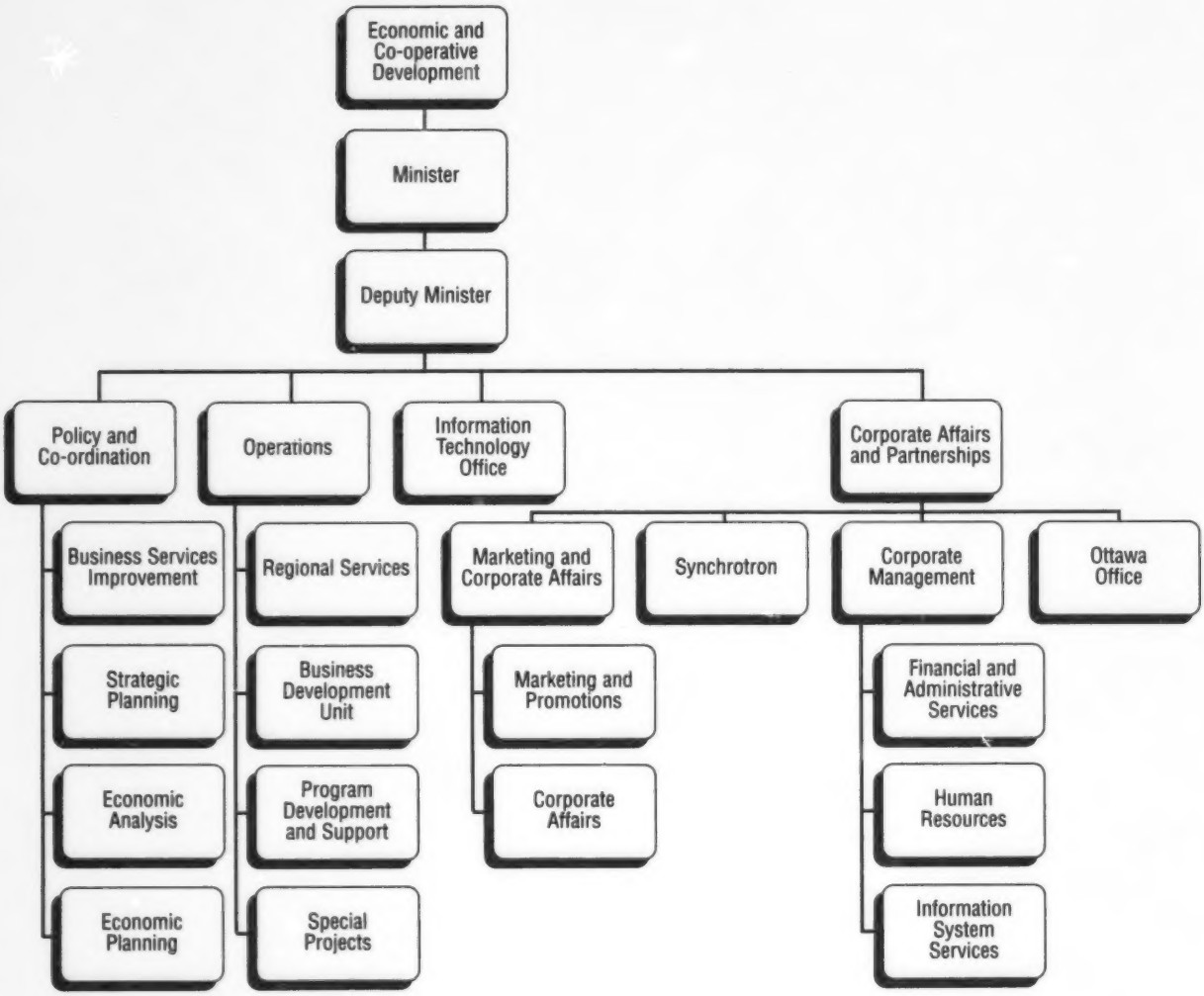
Mission Statement

To grow and diversify the Saskatchewan economy by building on our existing strengths.

2000-01 Objectives

- Advance a new economic development strategy for the province that builds on successes of past strategies and which positions Saskatchewan for success in the new knowledge-based economy.
- Promote innovation as a key value and strength of the Saskatchewan economy.
- Build association and infrastructure strength in Saskatchewan's key industry sectors through co-operation with industry, other provincial departments, the federal government and other economic stakeholders.
- Encourage regional and rural economic growth by continued support to REDAs, and by helping foster greater collaboration among those organizations and other regional economic development partners.
- Secure additional partnerships for, and investments in, the synchrotron and maximize Saskatchewan supplier opportunities in this project.
- Continue strong support to Saskatchewan's co-operative sector and in particular promote new generation co-operatives and neighbourhood development organizations.
- Work to encourage greater participation by Aboriginal people in the economy.
- Create a business environment conducive to the expansion of electronic commerce in the province.
- Lay the groundwork for new comprehensive investment attraction and marketing activities that promote the province's economic strengths and create a positive attitude about those strengths.
- Promote innovation and infrastructure through targeted investments from the Innovation and Science Fund, the Strategic Investments Fund and the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement.
- Develop a strategic plan for the department that addresses the government's overall accountability objectives.
- Continue to build a business environment that is conducive to electronic commerce.
- Continue to work on the government's 1996 Regulatory Reform Initiative.

Internal Organization as of March 31, 1999



Organization by Function

The department entered the 1999-2000 fiscal year with a structure aligned to support key economic sectors and provincial economic directions. The relatively flat organizational structure consisted of three divisions and one central office reporting directly to the deputy minister. The structure was designed to create a stronger service delivery to clients and strengthen the department's policy analysis role.

Policy Division

The division provides services and information in policy and program development, economic information production and presentation, inter-agency and interdepartmental relations, and monitoring and co-ordinating key provincial and departmental issues. The main change to the division during the year was its name – Policy, rather than Policy and Co-ordination. During the fiscal year, the division focused significant effort on the development of a new economic strategy, a task that involved much cross-functional work with other departments and agencies.

Operations

This division is responsible for the delivery of department programs and services that encourage the growth of businesses and co-operatives. The department's eight regional offices had been grouped into the TransCanada and Yellowhead Regions, with each region reporting to an executive director. This two-region structure was replaced by a flatter structure of all eight offices reporting to the executive director of Regional Economic Development Services. The Business Development Unit formalized its structure and sector portfolios during the year. High-priority, inter-sectoral initiatives that had been handled by the former Special Projects Branch were largely attended to by staff in other areas of the department.

Information Technology Office

The Information Technology Office (ITO) formalized its structure during the course of the year and added more resources to undertake its central role of promoting electronic government and electronic commerce. Co-ordination of the government's Y2K preparedness efforts was a major task of the office. After the year 2000 arrived with no incidents of technology-related problems, the ITO wound down the work of its Y2K Co-ordination Office.

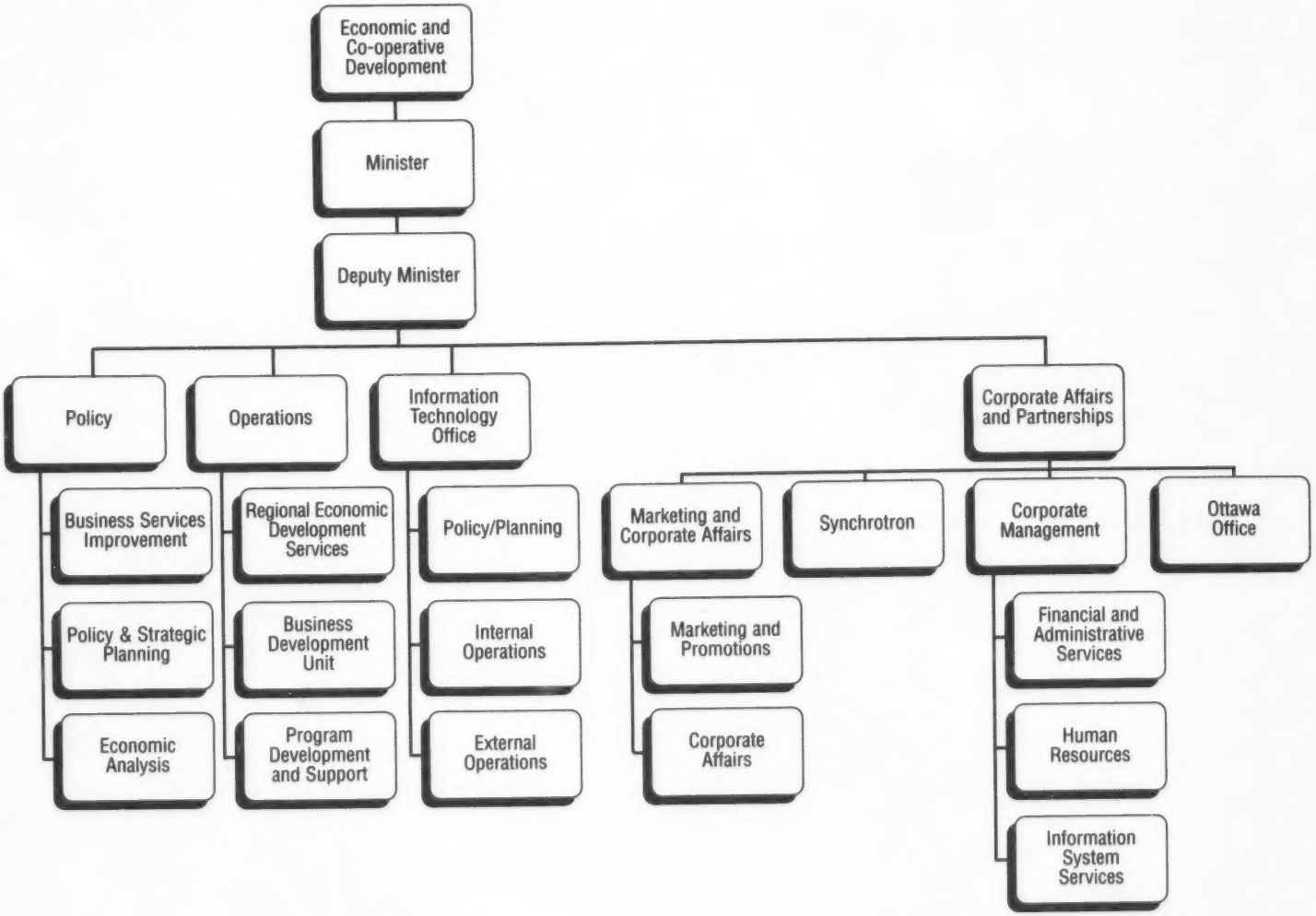
Corporate Affairs and Partnerships

This division encompasses a number of the department's service areas, and was unchanged during the course of the year. Corporate Management includes Human Resources, Information Systems Services, and Financial and Administrative Services functions. Marketing and Corporate Affairs Branch is responsible for communications, promotion and marketing activities of the department. This division also manages the government's Ottawa office and government interests in the synchrotron project. The division was headed by an associate deputy minister, who became acting deputy minister and ultimately permanent head of the department.

Other Organizations Funded Through the Department Vote

The provincial government provides funding for other government-related economic development activities through the department's budget vote. In 1999-2000, government and government-industry agencies receiving funds through this vote included: Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation (SOCO), Tourism Saskatchewan, the Office of Northern Affairs and the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP). The amounts provided to these agencies are noted under the Financial Report contained in this document.

Internal Organization as of March 31, 2000



Policy Division

The role of the Policy Division is to develop economic policies for the department and the government. The division also provides the department and its minister with timely policy and planning services and economic information.

At the end of 1999-2000, Policy consisted of three branches: Economic Analysis, Policy and Strategic Planning, and Business Services Improvement.

Services and Activities

The Policy Division provides services and information in the following main categories:

- policy and program development;
- economic information production and presentation;
- inter-agency and interdepartmental relations;
- federal/provincial relations; and
- monitoring and co-ordination of key provincial and departmental issues.

Policy and Program Development

Significant effort was focused on development of a new provincial economic strategy – *Partnership for Prosperity.*

The development of the provincial economic strategy and the consultation planned around it were noted in the Speech from the Throne:

> *"In the coming weeks, my government will spell out a comprehensive new economic strategy,* ***Partnership for Prosperity****, that will bring working people, businesses, communities, co-operatives and government together to continue building jobs and growth."*

The department was assigned responsibility to co-ordinate development of the strategy, reporting to a Steering Committee comprising the Deputy Minister to the Premier, the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Deputy Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development, and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Crown Investments Corporation. Policy Division led this work on behalf of the department.

Major objectives established for the strategy include:

- to build on Saskatchewan strengths;
- to promote investment in research and development;
- to ensure improvements in education and training of workers;
- to pursue actions to strengthen community economic development;
- to identify means to improve infrastructure;
- to encourage entrepreneurship and reduce regulation and other barriers to growth; and
- to streamline and improve services that promote jobs.

Pre-consultation discussions with key stakeholders in communities, Aboriginal people, business, labour, co-operatives and educational institutions were a key element of the strategy development. Formal consultations are planned for 2000-01 to help forge partnerships in order to make the plan right for the province and to ensure the plan's success.

Integration of social and economic development featured prominently in the development of the economic strategy. Officials began identifying specific objectives and actions that could support achievement of economic and social improvements for people, businesses and co-operatives, and communities within the province. A related effort was begun to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure progress in achieving goals.

Officials participated in a number of interdepartmental analyses of issues affecting economic development policy at the provincial and municipal levels, and issues related to tourism and northern development in Saskatchewan.

The Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (PACE) did not meet during the year, although individual members were consulted on and involved in a number of departmental events and initiatives. The role of PACE is currently being reviewed as part of the *Partnership for Prosperity* strategy.

During the fiscal year, the division initiated detailed analyses of more than 20 industry sectors as part of the work to develop *Partnership for Prosperity*. This work will contribute to an updated assessment of Saskatchewan's competitive advantages and identify areas of strategic importance to provincial economic development.

Aboriginal economic development is a component of *Partnership for Prosperity* and a key element of future economic development success in Saskatchewan. To develop a provincial Aboriginal economic strategy, the division, in conjunction with Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, worked with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan organizations, as well as officials of the federal government and other provincial departments. This strategy will help meet the provincial challenge of ensuring full participation by all people in a growing economy.

The division continued the development, analysis and implementation of policy on new generation co-operatives. *The New Generation Co-operatives Act, 1999* and *Regulations* were introduced and passed in 1999-2000, providing the legal framework and governance rules for these co-operatives, and offering them new capitalization mechanisms, such as access to non-member capital and availability of non par value shares.

Economic Information Production and Presentation

The division provided economic information and assessment to support departmental decision-making. Staff prepared monthly labour force reports, nine reports on economic indicators and forecasts, and a number of other assessments on specific aspects of the economy. Staff provided advice and assistance on five economic impact analyses of economic development projects and analyzed economic trends in support of the economic strategy. Staff also responded to requests for economic information from other government agencies and the general public.

Inter-agency and Interdepartmental Relations

Research and Development

During the reporting period, division staff and officials from Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training continued to develop a provincial research and development (R&D) policy framework. It is anticipated the *Partnership for Prosperity* economic strategy will incorporate this policy framework as an important element.

Forestry

Policy Division continued to lead department efforts to develop the Saskatchewan forestry sector. In conjunction with officials from Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management and the Office of Northern Affairs, Policy Division officials met with several potential investors in forest development projects, co-ordinated negotiations and approvals, and prepared key analyses and decision items for Cabinet. This work established the broad policy objectives for the province and the strategy to develop the forestry sector to its fullest potential. In effect, a full analysis and strategic approach to sector development was achieved. Decision items were advanced on forest industry expansion and value-added forestry options. As well, the division advanced Saskatchewan's membership in Forintek, a national forest industry research body, as a means of further establishing the growth of the sector in Saskatchewan.

Federal-Provincial Relations

Policy Division works with federal departments and other provinces to identify and advance the economic development of Saskatchewan. The division participates in a number of federal-provincial working groups in such areas as small business, innovation, investment and labour market information.

During the year, the division continued to assist the Office of Northern Affairs and Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in developing a federal-provincial agreement on northern development.

Policy Division co-ordinated the development of the Federal-Provincial Action Plan for Forest Sector Development. This plan established the close working relationship between federal and provincial agencies to grow the province's forestry sector. The action plan focuses on four key areas: establishing a forest development centre for Saskatchewan, defining training needs, co-ordinating infrastructure provision across the commercial forest zone, and building small business capacity to support growth. The plan was agreed to by federal and provincial ministers, and will form the basis for discussions in 2000 and beyond.

Policy continued to implement the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA), a four-year, $40-million fund designed to help build the province's capacity for economic growth through innovation. Signed in July 1998, the agreement is administered by the

department for the provincial government and Western Economic Diversification Canada for the federal government.

In partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Tourism Saskatchewan, Policy Division initiated a strategic framework for tourism development. The initiative involved consultations with the tourism industry and research to determine priorities for public sector investment to maximize growth of Saskatchewan's tourism industry.

Specific analyses were undertaken of development opportunities whose proponents sought joint federal and provincial funding support under WEPA.

WEPA provides funding for projects that significantly increase Saskatchewan's innovative capacity in economic infrastructure, tourism, export and marketing, and rural and northern economic development. During 1999-2000, 14 projects were approved for $19,081,794 in commitments. A total of $654,462 was disbursed during 1999-2000.

Examples of initiatives approved during the year included:

- $3.724 million for the Structural Sciences Centre to be located at the University of Saskatchewan;
- $3 million for the International Test Centre for CO_2 Research to be co-located at the University of Regina and at the Boundary Dam Power Plant near Estevan;
- $500,000 for the development of the Treaty Four Governance and Cultural Centre located adjacent to Fort Qu'Appelle; and
- $428,160 for the Technology Resource Centre for the apparel and textile industry to be located in Regina.

At the end of the 1999-2000 fiscal year, responsibility for the implementation of WEPA was transferred from Policy to the department's Operations Division.

Policy Division staff co-ordinated the department's input into the 1999 Western and Annual Premiers' Conferences and several meetings of federal-provincial-territorial ministers and deputy ministers responsible for industry, science and technology and trade. The division also followed up on a number of trade and innovation issues arising from meetings of western economic development ministers in 1998-99.

The division continued to represent Saskatchewan on the Working Group on Investment (WGI), established under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). The group pursued its responsibilities as required by the Investment Chapter of the AIT, and refined its proposals for clarifying and improving the Code of Conduct on Incentives. In April 2000, internal trade ministers requested further work on a number of unresolved issues related to the code of conduct.

The division participated in strategic planning exercises with Western Canadian provinces and the federal government to identify opportunities to encourage innovation and the commercialization of research in the West.

Monitoring and Co-ordination of Key Provincial and Departmental Issues

Regulatory Reform and Addressing Business Irritants

The 1999-2000 fiscal year marks the fourth year since the Regulatory Reform Initiative commenced its activities. The government remains poised to achieve the objective of reducing the number of regulations by 25 per cent within the initiative's 10-year mandate.

Overall, there has been a 13 per cent reduction in the number of regulations since the introduction of the initiative in May 1996. Achieving the 25 per cent reduction target will mean strict adherence to the zero sum policy. In the first three years of the initiative, the number of regulations repealed was nearly double the number the number enacted. In the 1999-2000 fiscal year, there was a slight reversal of this trend.

Regulatory reduction is closely tied to the concept of regulatory review. Government officials continue to review a wide array of regulations, often leading to consolidation and streamlining of the regulatory environment, as well as repeal of outdated or unnecessary regulations. At the close of the fiscal year, 487 (60 per cent) of the original 810 regulations had been reviewed, leaving 323 to be reviewed prior to the end of the initiative.

In the summer of 1999, Cabinet instructed the department to develop Principles of Good Regulation to guide officials in their required review of existing regulations and in the development of new regulations or amendments. A regulatory review guide was developed on this basis and, effective April 1, 2000, the guide is to be used by all officials

in their review of regulations. Furthermore, effective February 2000, all departments, agencies and Crown corporations are required to consult with the Business Services Improvement Branch (BSIB) in the development of new regulations or amendments.

During 1999-2000, the branch continued to co-ordinate the work of government departments, agencies and Crown corporations in resolving identified business irritants. A noteworthy accomplishment included the completion of addressing industry concerns in concert with the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association – Saskatchewan Chapter.

Work also continued on concerns raised by the Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan (ECAS). In the previous fiscal year, the branch prepared a detailed discussion paper and facilitated discussions between Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing and ECAS to review restricted electrical licenses. It is anticipated that a final report on this initiative will be completed by December 2000.

A major initiative in 1999-2000 involved the oil and gas industry and ongoing endeavours to streamline the approval process for drilling and seismic exploration. A discussion paper has been prepared and a working committee has been struck to address specific issues as they arise through consultations with the industry.

The BSIB is also working with the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, and Tourism Saskatchewan on an initiative to develop a self-regulating scheme for the outfitters.

Efforts continued in conjunction with the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan (HAS), the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and the departments of Justice, Finance and Labour to address concerns of HAS relating to a number of issues, several of which involve red tape and paper burden concerns. It is anticipated that this initiative may be brought to completion by January 2001.

In addition to working with industry associations, branch officials continued to identify and address business irritants at the firm specific level, ranging from concerns about raising capital to fund local projects to enquiries about the regulations mandating the establishment of an occupational health committee pursuant to *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*. These specific irritants are a valuable source of data to guide the future efforts of the BSIB in its efforts to reduce red tape and paper burden for business.

In 1999-2000, the BSIB was actively involved in the division's developmental efforts for a new provincial economic strategy. The branch profiled the regulatory environment for some 22 business sectors. As well, the branch provided the necessary input to ensure that a pro-growth regulatory environment is an essential component of a new provincial economic development strategy.

The Strategic Initiatives Fund

The Strategic Initiatives Fund supports research and development infrastructure and activities that will create new technologies, new products, new business opportunities and new economic activities. Support is targeted at the development of technologies required for Saskatchewan industries to remain efficient and competitive and the development of technologies that will lead to new higher value products, processes and uses for Saskatchewan products.

During the reporting period, projects were evaluated and ranked on the following criteria: economic impact assessment, industry support, financial viability, project feasibility, and availability of other public funds.

Applications were also considered as a result of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) program. Under CFI, the province agreed in principle to match federal dollars to a maximum of 40 per cent of the total project cost. Existing grants, such as the fund, were to be sourced to the greatest extent possible for the matching provincial dollars.

In 1999-2000, a total of $5,909,000 went to new and existing projects. Of those funds, $3,813,000 was allocated to federally-approved CFI projects, such as the Canadian Light Source, Inc. (synchrotron), which received $2 million.

At the close of 1999-2000, the fund was transferred to the Operations Division of the department.

2000-01 Division Objectives

- Assist in the development of new federal-provincial economic development initiatives that will help achieve the goals and objectives of the economic strategy.
- Provide economic information, analysis and advice in support of departmental objectives and priorities, particularly those relating to investment prospecting, community and business development, and which support measurement of department and provincial successes in achieving stated goals.
- Continue to develop and implement a renewed economic development strategy for the province, co-ordinating related strategic activities and building on sectoral opportunities.
- Undertake strategies and activities supporting a sectoral approach to economic development and job creation including an effective transition from PACE to sector forums.
- Continue the identification and implementation of federal-provincial economic initiatives that provide mutual benefits and emphasize collaboration.
- Continue co-operative approaches in economic development with other departments, agencies, governments, the business community and economic stakeholders, particularly in policy areas relating to community and regional economic development, co-operatives, taxation, transportation, research and development, Aboriginal economic development, trade and investment.
- Continue interdepartmental co-ordination to develop and expand the forest industry and primary sector growth through membership in Forintek and development of knowledge-based activities in a forest development centre and establishment of an agroforestry strategy.
- Partner with First Nations and Métis organizations as well as the federal government to build on the proposed Aboriginal economic development strategy.
- Work with partners in provincial, local and federal bodies to develop strategies for the promotion of Saskatchewan as a preferred place to live, work, visit and invest.

2000-01 Objectives – Regulatory Reform

Through the Business Services Improvement Branch, the department will continue to focus on addressing business red tape and regulatory irritants. The BSIB will further initiate and maintain constructive dialogue with businesses and their associations in an ongoing effort to identify and resolve business issues.

For the 2000-01 fiscal year, the BSIB plans to actively canvass the business community to better understand and address industry-specific irritants. Concurrently, the BSIB will continue with its educational endeavours, including the provision of information to businesses that accurately summarizes and simplifies regulatory requirements.

In 2000-01, a major branch priority will be its continued participation and leadership in ensuring a pro-growth regulatory environment is established to provide a fundamental thrust in the upcoming provincial economic strategy. The branch is expected to play a critical role in advancing further expansion of the province's key economic sectors.

For more information, contact:

Policy Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
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1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, SK S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-2378
Facsimile: (306) 787-2198

Operations Division

The Operations Division is responsible for the delivery of department programs and services that encourage the growth of businesses and co-operatives. It accomplishes this through three branches or units:

- the Regional Economic Development Services Branch, which comprises eight regional offices and provides general advice to businesses and co-operatives and support to regional economic development authorities (REDAs);
- the Business Development Unit, which works with growth firms and sectors, and helps co-ordinate government investment attraction initiatives; and
- the Program Development and Support Branch, which co-ordinates the planning, delivery and administration of department programs.

Regional Economic Development Services Branch

The Regional Economic Development Services Branch provides business and co-operative development support through assessment, information, pathfinding and referral services. The branch encourages job creation by Saskatchewan's business community by co-ordinating and delivering a comprehensive small business support system in partnership with the public and private sectors. The branch also works with community leaders to support and strengthen community economic development in the province.

Services are delivered through eight regional offices located in Estevan, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current and Yorkton.

During the fiscal year, the branch was responsible for:

- providing and managing services for business development, co-operative development and community economic development;
- assessing the needs of value-added client business and matching those needs with suppliers of business programs and services;
- supporting the development of regional economic development authorities (REDAs) and assisting them in increasing their service capacity;
- supporting the development of Neighbourhood Development Organizations (NDOs) and assisting them in developing the services and infrastructure in their inner cities; and
- supporting the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC), a federal/provincial partnership, in its efforts to provide a "single window" information service to Saskatchewan businesses.

Branch achievements are grouped into four categories: information and services, small and medium enterprises, partnerships, and regional economic development authorities.

Information and Services

One of the branch's goals is to ensure that information, assessment and pathfinding services are provided to support small business and co-operative development in the province.

During 1999-2000, the branch handled 13,897 requests for business and co-operative information and assistance. It also continued to develop, update and distribute small business information, directories and databases. These include a series of 84 business and co-operative "how to" resource materials handouts, 48 Kinds-of-Business resources, a cash flow planning model, the *Directory of Business Associations* and the *Inventory of Programs and Services for Entrepreneurs.*

Small and Medium Enterprises

Another major branch activity is working with value-added small and medium enterprises (SMEs), ranking them in terms of growth potential and providing assistance as required. Each regional office is responsible for a specific area of the province. During the fiscal year, regional staff maintained regular contact with local businesses, helped identify firms with growth potential, and assessed their needs to determine what help they required from the department or other sources.

Partnerships

The branch works to identify partners and assist them in leveraging resources and pursuing opportunities that enhance wealth and job creation. The branch encourages partners to provide business training and education, and to assist in the development of economic development groups and REDAs.

One of the branch's main partnership activities is the six-year-old Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, jointly funded and managed by the department and the federal government. The Saskatoon-based centre supports Saskatchewan business development and entrepreneurial processes. As the hub of the "single window" network, the centre provides user-friendly information to aid business decisions and information on government programs and services.

The centre handled 26,419 requests for business information. It also provides information through its Web site, fax-on-demand system, promotional efforts at trade shows, and presentations and tours of the CSBSC.

During the reporting period, the CSBSC continued to work on its regionalization initiative to improve delivery of services in locations outside Saskatoon. Regionalization involves the creation of a network of regional or satellite offices to extend centre services and make information and walk-in services readily available in smaller communities. Twelve regional sites have been launched and an additional four sites are under development.

A "single window" approach to business information depends on partnerships with other agencies involved in economic development. An infrastructure of such agencies has been developed and includes provincial and federal departments, business associations, REDAs and various community economic development organizations, selected chambers of commerce, banks and credit unions.

There are more than 300 of these partnership arrangements, with partners acting as distribution points for small business information.

Working with partner organizations, branch staff provided resources – expertise, materials or both – to various training programs, such as seminars on starting a business and cash flow model training. Staff served on a number of boards and committees for business development and training initiatives. These initiatives included the Self Employment Assistance Program, the JobStart/Future Skills Program, and the One-Stop Business Registration initiative. Staff also helped in the development of business enterprise centres, including the co-location of department offices within those centres.

Regional Enterprise Centres

The branch provides ongoing support to the development of regional business enterprise centres, including co-location in centres where there are regional offices of the department. These "single window" centres are being developed as a means to co-ordinate services to assist entrepreneurship and small business development in communities or regions to help their economies grow and create jobs.

These initiatives are examples of innovative partnerships among local, regional, provincial and federal organizations. They are excellent examples of the current focus on grassroots economic development at the regional level and have been developed in conjunction with REDAs.

Several regions in the province have established regional enterprise centres to provide assistance to people starting or expanding small business. Partner organizations include the provincial REDAs, federal Community Futures Development Corporations, department regional offices, chambers of commerce, Western Economic Diversification, Women Entrepreneurs and tribal councils. The centres are regional access partner sites of the CSBSC. Centres have been established in Estevan, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Swift Current, Weyburn, Yorkton and the Cowessess First Nation.

Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs)

The REDA initiative was introduced in 1993 as a key government economic development initiative.

REDAs offer a co-ordinated, co-operative approach to provincial economic development. Membership consists of communities, rural municipalities, businesses, co-operatives and First Nations.

Partners pool their resources to support job and wealth creation within their regions. During 1999-2000, 28 REDAs were operating in Saskatchewan.

The branch offers a range of organizational and professional services to existing and emerging REDAs, including services that increase their economic development capacity.

During the year, the branch delivered a number of REDA resources and training tools, including:

- the REDA Enhancement Fund, for projects that strengthen regional infrastructure and build economic development capacity; in 1999-2000, 88 projects were approved involving 26 REDAs.
- the REDA Youth Employment Initiative, resulting in term employment on business projects for 17 youth in 15 REDAs.
- the REDA Board Governance Training program on the roles and responsibilities of board members in community economic development.
- Small Business Counsellor Accreditation Training for REDA economic development officers.
- a new education and training video – *Growing From Within – A Practical Approach to Regional Economic Development* – was launched in October and November of 1999. The video was nominated for Best Industrial/Promotional Production by the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival.
- business retention training facilitated by Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI). Staff from 19 REDAs participated. This will be an ongoing initiative.

A highlight of the year was the *Connectivity Conference* held February 23-25, 2000 and coinciding with *REDA Week in Saskatchewan*. The conference was jointly hosted by the Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association (SEDA), Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), the department and Western Economic Diversification. All 28 REDAs were represented. Evaluation indicated a successful conference with recommendations for continued collaboration and partnership.

REDA Activities in 1999-2000

REDAs provided a variety of services to businesses and communities in their regions. REDAs also undertook economic development initiatives with the ongoing assistance of branch staff. Services are typically grouped into seven categories:

Co-ordination Services

REDAs co-ordinate the activities of various organizations within regions in order to achieve collaboration and synergy while reducing duplication. Examples include co-ordinating:

- partner groups to deliver economic development services and form regional enterprise centres.
- regional marketing initiatives, such as developing Web pages, profiles, brochures and tourism activities for member communities and regions.
- trade shows, conferences, community events and various business promotions.
- projects, such as intensive livestock operations, housing, employment services, area transportation, regional waste and Internet access, with partners and community groups.
- regional business retention programs.
- development and start-up of local chapters of Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan.
- Year 2000 celebrations and a variety of projects funded by the Millennium Bureau of Canada.

Organizational Development and Planning Services

REDAs help increase the capacity of economic development organizations within their areas. Examples include:

- accessing funding from the REDA Enhancement Fund. REDAs were able to purchase or upgrade computer equipment and software and purchase resources for enterprise centres.
- participating in the Youth Employment Program, through which 15 REDAs hired 17 youth on work terms.
- planning and preparing for annual meetings and strategic planning sessions, recruiting membership, formulating membership fees, soliciting private sector funding and supporting and establishing satellite offices in member communities.

Education and Training Services

REDAs ensure the presence of educational services to meet the needs of the regional business and economic development communities by:

- developing training needs assessments on a regional basis.
- hosting and delivering training initiatives and seminars on such topics as self-employment and entrepreneurship, business development, marketing, patenting, tourism and customer service, assessing business opportunities, financial planning and regulatory reform. These initiatives are often in partnership or on a contract basis with organizations like the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan, Human Resources Development Canada, regional colleges and Community Futures Development Corporations.
- participation by board members and staff in training opportunities, such as Business Retention and Expansion International, Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association, Economic Developers Association of Canada and University of Waterloo economic development officer training.

Information Services

REDAs work to ensure entrepreneurs, businesses and other groups can access the information they require. Examples include:

- developing and maintaining resource libraries. Many REDAs have partnered with other economic development service providers to form enterprise centres and regionalization sites of the CSBSC.
- assisting business clients with business planning, provision of business information, identifying opportunities and sourcing financial assistance.
- developing and maintaining Web sites, as well as administering and co-ordinating Community Access Program sites (public Internet access).
- developing and publishing regional demographic information, business listings, brochures, profiles, pamphlets and newsletters.

Research and Development Services

REDAs identify economic development and business opportunities within their regions by:

- researching and developing initiatives on a regional basis, such as value-added agriculture and processing, industry development and business retention, water supply and waste handling, area transportation, short line railways, housing shortages and tourism projects.
- providing research and development services to individual clients.
- conducting consumer market, labour market and training research, preparing feasibility and market opportunity studies and developing regional needs assessments.
- developing and maintaining databases of regional businesses/industry.

Promotion and Marketing Services

REDAs promote their regions for investment attraction and business retention purposes by:

- preparing for announcements and grand openings, designing letterhead and logos, developing presentations for marketing and soliciting new members.
- promoting regional tourism.
- promoting local/regional businesses through events, such as business awards, shop locally initiatives as well as participating and sponsoring trade shows (locally and out-of-province).
- participating in economic development organizations, such as Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association, Saskatchewan Council for Community Development, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan and tourism organizations.

Project Management Services

REDAs manage and implement specific regional projects and initiatives. Examples include:

- providing administration services, developing surveys and feasibility studies for groups, such as forestry organizations, regional waste and transportation committees, new generation co-operatives, livestock producers and manufacturing projects.
- recruiting businesses and/or services, such as lawyers and doctors, and participating in regional and local tourism projects.
- administering the Small Business Loans Associations (SBLA) program.
- funding through the REDA Enhancement Fund, which enabled REDAs to carry out projects such as establishing enterprise centres, tourism development, and project feasibility studies.

2000-01 Branch Objectives

- Increase the capacity of REDAs to undertake business development by providing services and resources, including new business development tools and training initiatives for all REDA boards and professional staff.
- Provide and manage services for business, co-operative and community economic development. Continue to focus efforts on assessing value-added client business needs and matching those needs with suppliers of business programs and services.
- Continue to support the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, the federal/provincial "single window" information service to business, and the network of 16 CSBSC regional access partner sites.
- Provide services and resources to support the capacity of the new neighbourhood development organizations to undertake programming in inner-city neighbourhoods in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and North Battleford.
- Continue to provide the department with intelligence on regional economic developments, issues and support services.

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Business Development Unit

The Business Development Unit focuses on enhancing the growth and diversity of value-added and knowledge-based industries in Saskatchewan. The unit is organized by priority sectors with each business development manager being responsible for one or more sectors. The unit identifies areas for growth, expansion and investment, and participates with other partners in the development of industry-enhancing projects, related support infrastructure and innovative services for value-added and knowledge-based businesses and co-operatives. The unit also leads provincial investment attraction and procurement initiatives.

The unit accomplishes its goals by:

- providing the department and its business clients with specialized sectoral intelligence.
- working with the other department units and divisions and other departments, agencies and stakeholders to formulate and execute industrial sector development strategies.
- providing business counselling to firms considering investment in Saskatchewan.
- working with government, industry and academic partners to facilitate new research and development and support infrastructure.
- providing specialized pathfinding services to business clients.
- providing management counselling to local firms on quality, productivity, marketing, strategic business planning, best manufacturing practices, new technology and innovative production techniques/processes.
- providing liaison and third party mediatory services between industry and other government departments/agencies to resolve issues affecting business growth and expansion.
- maintaining databases on manufacturing, construction and key sectors of the economy.

1999-2000 Achievements

Major achievements of the Business Development Unit in 1999-2000 are grouped under four categories: investment attraction, infrastructure development, industrial development and client service.

Investment Attraction

During the fiscal year, staff in the unit:

- Provided facilitation services to Mitchell's Foods in its $45-million expansion in Saskatoon and to Harvest Foods in its $6-million expansion in Yorkton. These expansions will lead to 250 new permanent jobs, 250 temporary construction jobs and more than 210 other jobs.
- assisted DirecTEL, a US-based call centre company, with its plans to invest in Saskatchewan and facilitated location selection, human resource requirements and general business services. This led to DirecTEL opening its first Canadian call center in Saskatoon with plans to employ 225 staff.
- assisted Alberta Garment Manufacturing with its expansion and training needs. This resulted in the purchase and expansion of an existing clothing factory in Saskatoon and led to the retention of 76 existing jobs and the creation of 65 new jobs.
- assisted with the financing and training needs of other companies planning expansions, including Hitachi, Cover-All Shelters and Dairyworld Foods.

Infrastructure Development

In this area, unit staff:

- assisted the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina on various initiatives, which led to the acquisition of a scanning transmission electron microscope (STEM), and the establishment of the Structural Sciences Centre, the distributed information visualization laboratory and the Food Development Centre.
- worked with the apparel and textile industry and other government departments to help the Apparel and Textile Association of Saskatchewan implement a sewing machine operator training program and establish a new technology and training centre.

- assisted the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) in establishing a Euro Testing service for assisting local manufacturers in the development of products that comply with European standards, enabling them to penetrate the European market. Worked with PAMI to develop its Crops Processing Centre. With support from the Strategic Initiatives Fund, assisted PAMI in acquiring essential equipment for the centre.
- worked with POS Pilot Plant staff on plans to upgrade its facility to meet the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's protocol for good manufacturing practices. Through support from the Strategic Initiatives Fund, the POS Pilot Plant started the process of upgrading its facility to meet these requirements.

Industrial Development

In the area of industrial development, the unit:

- facilitated the development of the government's partnership with the Medical Research Council of Canada, which in its first year funded 20 researchers in health sciences at the University of Saskatchewan.
- worked with Bombardier and its team of subcontractors to ensure maximum opportunities for Saskatchewan suppliers on the NATO Flying Training in Canada project. This resulted in vendor meetings in Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon, which were attended by 491 local companies.
- worked with the Department of National Defence (DND) to identify supply opportunities for Saskatchewan firms. This led to Ralph McKay Industries of Regina winning a large contract to produce steel inserts for M113 track shoes, a pilot project using Saskatchewan-made filters on naval patrol frigates, and the establishment of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute as a testing and evaluation centre for various DND projects, including the Humanitarian Demining project.
- assisted the Standards Council of Canada to develop the first Canadian Standards Strategy through the co-ordination and organization of several local consultation sessions.
- co-ordinated a number of corporate missions including: participation by 23 Saskatchewan companies to showcase their products at the Alberta Gift Show and gain education on product commercialization; a best manufacturing practices technology tour by a group of agricultural equipment manufacturers to Quebec and Ontario; a tour of Saskatchewan firms by CAE Electronics, a subcontractor on the NATO Flying Training in Canada project; a site visit by 20 Saskatchewan companies to two U.S. synchrotron facilities; and a provincial delegation of stakeholders to the Globe 2000 conference on the environment industry.
- co-chaired and provided co-ordination support to an industry/government corporate procurement committee, whose mandate is to develop quality, competitive Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services. The products and/or services of over 20 companies were showcased to 19 of the province's largest corporate purchasers.
- developed a factor cost model, in conjunction with Policy Division and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, to compare the costs of operating an industrial manufacturing or value-added processing facility in Saskatchewan with other jurisdictions.
- worked with industry, the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association and the Canada-West Equipment Dealers Association to address dealer purification issues in the agricultural equipment manufacturing industry, and collaborated with Saskatchewan Justice and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food to draft legislation that expanded the rights of local dealers. Legislation was tabled and passed on December 19, 1999.
- planned, co-ordinated and delivered workshops in partnership with others on entrepreneurship and best practices, industry diagnostics of the metal fabrication sector, lean manufacturing and innovative applications of communications technologies in the delivery of health care.
- in partnership with industry, supported the formation of the Saskatchewan New Media Developers Association.
- provided sectoral intelligence for the new economic strategy through leadership and partnership roles on several of the 21 sector teams.

- co-ordinated research into the shortage of skilled information technology workers in the province. Presented results to chapter meetings of the Canadian Information Processing Society.
- represented the province and its interests at various federal, provincial and industry committees.
- responded to numerous inquiries from entrepreneurs and firms considering Saskatchewan as a manufacturing or processing location.

Client Service

During the reporting period, unit staff:

- provided guidance and support to various industry associations in the province's key industry sectors, and advanced a range of industry-related concerns and issues through government.
- maintained and administered the Saskatchewan Made Program, the Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide, the Major Projects Inventory and other sectoral databases.
- provided professional advice to Saskatchewan companies on quality management and standards-related matters, including technical requirements, testing, certification and registration, business planning and financing, location selection and alliances/partnerships.
- delivered presentations on quality and international standards at industry forums and educational institutions.
- articulated positions on standards at various national and international forums, and actively participated in the National Standards System through membership on various committees and working groups including the Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee of the Standards Council of Canada.

2000-01 Unit Objectives

- Update strategic sector plans in co-operation with Policy Division and other agencies to promote industry development, diversification and growth.
- Identify strategic research and development opportunities and their potential for commercialization, technology transfer or other support services.
- Organize major training events and/or other collaborative projects to enhance the technical and managerial skills and competitiveness of businesses in Saskatchewan's value-added and knowledge-based sectors.
- Enhance working relationships with other related branches, departments and agencies across all levels of governments in order to clarify roles, avoid duplication of efforts and maximize resources in support of key sectors and projects.
- Assist Saskatchewan companies to increase their business in local markets, through identification of federal and provincial procurement opportunities and other opportunities within the province.
- Promote participation by Saskatchewan companies in trade and export activities, and liaise with provincial federal trade officials to enhance awareness of all trade initiatives, programs, missions, trade shows and delegations that may be of interest to companies in each sector.
- Profile selected sectors and industries from a world perspective, identify investment attraction opportunities within respective industries and proactively pursue these opportunities.
- Promote emerging developments in each sector to create a positive investor psychology within Saskatchewan.
- Work with other provincial and federal departments to develop policies leading to industry or sector developments within the province.

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Program Development and Support Branch

The Program Development and Support Branch helps develop, manage and deliver department programs and services for business, co-operatives and community economic development. It consists of three units: Regional Programs, Co-operative and Community Economic Development, and Investment Services.

Regional Programs and Services

This unit provides support to the Regional Economic Development Services Branch in planning, developing and delivering programs and initiatives to assist, encourage and support the development of the provincial small business, co-operative, and community economic development sectors.

The unit develops and delivers programs, training initiatives and resource materials for business, co-operative and community economic development. The unit also helps develop and deliver activities promoting business and co-operatives during *Co-operatives Week, Small Business Week, REDA Week* and other regional events. It also manages and supports the development and delivery of the federal/provincial partnership to operate the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre and its network of regional access partner sites. In addition, the unit manages the financial, reporting and human resource aspects for the Operations Division.

During 1999-2000, the unit administered the matching grant funding to the province's 28 REDAs. REDAs received a total of $1,500,000 in matching grant funding. Under the REDA Enhancement Fund, 26 REDAs received $645,564 in matching grant funding for 88 economic development projects. The REDA Youth Employment Program placed and trained 17 candidates in 15 different REDA locations, for total program funding of $200,000. Two youth candidates obtained permanent employment with REDAs. In addition, the unit administered funding to the province's three neighbourhood development organizations (NDOs) totaling $439,406, funded 10 Co-operative Development Assistance Program projects totaling $87,325 and provided $145,631 towards 14 community economic development initiatives in partnership with the co-operative sector.

Co-operative and Community Economic Development

One of the department's mandates is to promote and support the use of co-operative structures, principles and business practices to strengthen and enhance the province's economy and society. During the year, the branch updated the 1993 mandate paper – *Continuing the Co-operative Sector and Government Partnership* – to reflect the government's continued commitment to the sector and its core values of co-operation, community and partnerships.

Building on the enhanced support to co-operatives in 1998-99, the department undertook a number of partnership initiatives with the co-operative sector in 1999-2000. These included the development of New Generation Co-operatives (NGC) legislation and regulations, hosting an NGC conference, providing education and training programs for board members and staff of the province's three inner-city NDOs, updating the Youth Program curriculum, and supporting Aboriginal and francophone community economic development conferences.

During 1999-2000, the unit's co-operative activities were grouped into six general categories:

- co-operative sector relations and liaison;
- co-operative development and diversification projects;
- development of new co-operatives;
- co-operative models for community development and community economic development;
- resource materials, research and promotion; and
- monitoring the legislative and regulatory environment affecting co-operatives.

Co-operative Sector Relations and Liaison

The unit continued to strengthen positive relations between the government and all levels of the co-operative sector.

The unit kept the co-operative sector informed about current government polices, issues and initiatives, and worked to increase government awareness of the needs, interests and concerns of Saskatchewan's major co-operatives, the broad co-operative sector, communities and other stakeholder organizations involved in co-operative education and promotion.

Other activities in sector relations and liaison included:

- completing a joint review of the co-operative work plan, including structures for and approaches to development of new co-operatives;
- undertaking and completing a joint initiative with the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) to update the Youth Program curriculum and to undertake some joint board training initiatives involving the neighbourhood development organizations;
- maintaining liaison with the co-operative sector through non-voting membership on the Saskatchewan Region of the CCA;
- maintaining liaison with the co-operative sector through membership on the management board of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan;
- co-ordinating meetings between co-operative sector officials and senior government officials to increase awareness and communications at the operational level between government and the co-operative sector;
- meeting with representatives of the co-operative sector to explore ways the provincial government and co-operative sector can work together on co-operative development and to collaborate on issues affecting co-operatives, including input on the province's proposed economic strategy;
- establishing and participating on a New Generation Co-operatives conference planning committee; and
- maintaining liaison with the Federal/Provincial/ Territorial Senior Officials Responsible for Co-operatives.

Co-operative Development and Diversification Projects

The department provided advice and support to Saskatchewan's developed and emerging co-operatives to assist them in their pursuit of development opportunities that support their economic growth and diversification and that of the province.

A major area of focus was on the application of the new generation co-operative model that allows producers to invest in agricultural value-added activity. Regional staff provided support on 18 projects including pasta, wild boar, bison, ostrich and herb and spice.

Development of New Co-operatives

In 1999-2000, there was a growing level of activity across the province in co-operative development. Staff conducted research, carried out promotional activities through workshops, lectures, seminars and public meetings, and provided dedicated assistance to more than 85 groups at varying stages of development.

The Co-operative Development Assistance Program (CDAP) guidelines were revised to include assistance for NGCs. The program encourages new co-operative enterprises through funding for organizational development and business and marketing analysis for co-operatives. Twelve applicants were approved for assistance for total grants of $74,825. Projects included housing, care homes, worker, community service and new generation co-operatives.

Co-operative Models for Community Development and Community Economic Development

The department continued to develop and implement co-operative solutions to challenges facing Saskatchewan communities, such as rural restructuring, inner-city poverty, and Aboriginal community development.

Staff from the department and Saskatchewan Social Services worked closely with the province's three Neighbourhood Development Organizations (NDOs). This initiative is directed at low-income inner-city neighbourhood organizations and groups. The departments gave organizational development and research assistance to these groups to undertake community and economic programming in their core neighbourhoods. Some activities of the NDOs included participation in the province's Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program (NHOP), assistance in the establishment of community service and worker co-operatives, entrepreneurial training, and a micro-loan fund. In addition, the departments held an evaluation workshop with the NDOs to assist them in the development of effective and measurable workplans. Grants totaling $439,406 were provided to the three NDOs that formed:

- Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon;
- Riverbank Development Corporation in Prince Albert; and
- Community Action Alliance of Regina Co-operative in Regina.

The department continued to support the Saskatchewan Council on Community Development (SCCD) in its activities and provided funding of $5,000 to SCCD.

Resource Materials, Research and Promotion

The department, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and the co-operative sector co-hosted the *"Building the New Saskatchewan"* New Generation Co-operatives conference January 26-27 in Saskatoon. This major conference attracted over 150 speakers and participants from across Canada and the United States. The conference achieved its objectives of promoting awareness and development among producer groups.

The department provided support for the *Balanced Approaches to Socio-Economic Development in Rural and Northern Saskatchewan* symposium held March 13-14 in Prince Albert. This conference focused on rural and northern issues with particular attention to involvement of Aboriginal peoples.

Other sponsorships included support to the *Forum Economique Fransaskois* held on February 4 and 5, and to the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation annual conference held in Montreal.

Other annual promotional events included:

- the *Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards*, held in October, which the department and the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association co-host to recognize the outstanding and innovative contributions that co-operative members and leaders have made to the sector and the province;
- *Co-operatives Week*, an annual provincial and national celebration in mid-October, highlighted by the Merit Awards ceremony and the week's launch event, the Co-operative Flag-Raising at the Legislative Building; and
- presentation of 75 long-service recognition awards to Saskatchewan co-operatives marking 25, 40, 50, 75, 80, 90 and 100 years of operation.

In 1999-2000, the department developed a New Generation Co-operatives brochure and updated the NGC development guide. Other resources included promotional materials for the NGC conference and a revised government and co-operative sector mandate paper.

In research, the department signed a new five-year agreement with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives that provides $75,000 annually in support of its teaching, research and extension activities. In addition, the centre was contracted to update the 1998 statistical report on the economic and social impact of co-operatives on Saskatchewan. The updated report is expected to be released in 2000-01.

Monitoring the Legislative and Regulatory Environment Affecting Co-operatives

The department worked with co-operatives and Saskatchewan Justice to maintain an effective legislative and regulatory environment that supports government and sector requirements, and to ensure that sufficient and appropriate information is available for efficient policy and program planning. One major activity included assisting in the development of new generation co-operatives legislation and regulations. The NGC legislation and regulations were proclaimed on January 26 providing co-operatives with greater flexibility in organizational structure in order to access capital markets, attract equity capital and define delivery rights and responsibilities.

Investment Services

The goal of the Investment Services Unit is to promote the development and growth of Saskatchewan businesses in ways designed to increase their equity financing from the community, employees or other individuals, and to create and maintain jobs.

In pursuing this goal, the unit is responsible for administering various activities including the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program, Business Immigration Programs and the Small Business Loans Association Program.

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations (LSVCC) Program has three streams:

- Employee Investment – Employees are encouraged to invest in their firms. An employee-controlled investment fund is established, allowing employees to invest into the fund and then receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000. The fund then invests in the employer company for use in its business operations.
- Provincial Pool Funds – These funds encourage Saskatchewan residents to make equity investments into small and medium-sized Saskatchewan-based businesses. Through labour associations, broadly based investment corporations are established. These corporations issue shares to Saskatchewan residents then invest those funds in a number of eligible Saskatchewan businesses.

Provincial pool funds are governed by provincial legislation. Investors receive provincial tax credits of 20 per cent on investments of up to $5,000 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.

- Federal Pool Funds – These funds have the same objective as provincial pool funds. The difference is that the Canada Income Tax Act governs federal funds and investors receive provincial tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $3,500 and federal tax credits of 15 per cent on investments of up to $5,000.

Department staff assist all the funds in becoming registered in the province, and issue both the provincial and federal tax credits to the investors.

In 1999-2000, 16 employee funds, two provincial pool funds and two national pool funds were operating under the program. Following intensive work by its managers and department staff, a second provincial pool fund was approved. Although the pool fund did not meet the minimum opening requirements, the intention is to try again in the upcoming selling season. On the federal side, both national pool funds had a successful selling season and have funds available for investment into Saskatchewan businesses.

Highlights of activities under the LSVCC program are shown in the following chart:

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

	Fiscal 1999-2000	Program to Date (April 1989-March 2000)
Employee Funds		
Number of Registrants Raising Funds	10	25
Funds Invested in Small Businesses	$674,007	$6,376,529
Amounts on which Tax Credits Paid	$662,996	$4,226,588
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$132,556	$830,168
Jobs Created or Maintained (gross)	247	1,036
Provincial Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$5,387,438	$8,185,690
Number of Investors	2,124	2,880
Number of Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	2	2
Number of Companies Receiving Equity Funding	2	2
Amount of Funds Invested	$540,000	$540,000
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$1,203,178	$1,637,138
National Pool Funds		
Funds Raised	$19,293,959	$136,771,743
Number of Investors	6,256	50,158
Number of Investments Made into Eligible Businesses	2	23
Eligible Businesses Receiving Equity Funding	2	12
Amount of Funds Invested	$563,217	$44,771,448
Provincial Tax Credits Issued	$2,870,442	$24,650,967

Business Immigration Programs

The goals of the Business Immigration Programs are to attract immigrant entrepreneurs who have specific business skills and experience, and immigrants who can fill critical economic skill shortages to enhance economic development in the province. During the year, staff continued to develop and manage the Provincial Nominee Program.

Staff participated in one federal/provincial promotion and recruitment mission in March 2000. The mission was to the United Kingdom and Europe, where staff promoted the Provincial Nominee Program at seminars, trade shows and in print advertisements. Follow-up visits to Saskatchewan by immigrants interested in relocating to the province have already occurred. Staff also arranged for incoming immigrants to meet with sector specialists, regional economic development authorities and the business community to assist with the decision to immigrate.

Staff participated in a number of federal/provincial working group meetings on selection criteria, and promotion and recruitment during the year in an effort to assist with the development of policy and strategic planning at the federal level.

Provincial Nominee Program

Under provisions of the Canada-Saskatchewan Immigration Agreement, the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), a two-year pilot project, was implemented in December 1998. The PNP allows Saskatchewan to nominate up to 150 applicants who will have a significant impact in one of the province's key economic sectors. Eligibility is restricted to skilled workers and businesspersons. A significant component of the PNP is the ability of Saskatchewan companies and industry associations to participate in the identification and attraction of these applicants.

A 1998 consultant's study elicited information from businesses, associations, government departments and agencies in order to identify critical skill shortages. Shortages identified included machinists, specialty welders, gear grinders, senior pressmen, hog barn managers, heavy-duty equipment mechanics and veterinarians for rural large-animal practices. Since then, further studies have identified additional critical skill shortages within the province. Those include CNC punch machine operators, gear design engineers and others in the process of being classified. As more Saskatchewan companies become aware of the PNP, more skill shortages are being designated with the hopes of filling long-time needs of Saskatchewan companies to be able to operate and even expand their businesses.

Saskatchewan was the first province to have a visa issued under the Provincial Nominee Program. As of March 31, 2000, 24 skilled workers had been nominated, 16 visas had been issued, 13 had officially landed and 14 (one on work authorization) applicants were employed by April 1, 2000. Three business applicants had been nominated, one visa had been issued and the applicant was still making arrangements to sell his previous business prior to landing, and another was here on a seasonal work authorization awaiting issuance of a Canadian visa.

Immigrant Investor Program

During the fiscal year, the department continued to monitor and review existing immigrant investor funds still operating under the previous Immigrant Investor Program. A revised Immigrant Investor Program was implemented on April 1, 1999 and featured one Canada Fund (excluding Quebec) that will raise investments from immigrants. These monies will be distributed to participating provinces to be used for economic development purposes. At this time, Saskatchewan has chosen not to participate in the new program.

Small Business Loans Association Program

A Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) can be formed by the incorporation of four or more community-based interest groups: individuals, partnerships, co-operatives or corporations. Enhancements to the program made in 1999-2000 included an increase in the maximum loan advance to an eligible business from $5,000 to $10,000, and an increase to the SBLA's maximum interest-free revolving line of credit from $50,000 to $100,000. These enhancements provided the associations with the ability to expand their loan portfolios by granting larger loans to a greater number of prospective clients.

The objectives of the SBLA Program are:

- to provide business development opportunities to the non-traditional entrepreneur and to extend financing beyond the scope of traditional lenders to contribute to the success of the small entrepreneur; and
- to promote the growth and diversification of Saskatchewan by involving existing businesses and associations in assisting small start-up or existing businesses in their communities.

Department staff are responsible for:

- approving new SBLAs and providing final approval on client loans;
- disbursing funds to the SBLAs to then be disbursed to the small businesses;
- registering loan security appropriately;
- accepting and recording the principal payments from SBLAs on behalf of small businesses; and
- collecting on delinquent loans.

During the reporting year, the following program activity occurred:

Small Business Loans Association Program

	1999-2000	Program to Date (April 1989-March 2000)
Associations Approved	1	346
Active Associations	252	346
Approved Client Loans	763	6,662
Dollar Value of Approved Client Loans	$4,939,494	$31,291,629
Client Remittances	$2,451,117	$21,466,527
Total Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	2,134	2,134
Dollar Value of Active Client Loans at the End of the Year	$7,879,955	$7,879,955
Jobs Created	756	7,686
Jobs Maintained	851	6,914
New Businesses Created	271	3,328

Youth Provincial Action Committee on the Economy (Youth PACE)

This committee provides an excellent opportunity to engage in dialogue with youth representing a variety of backgrounds and personal experiences on issues of interest to both government and youth.

The committee met to discuss the forestry strategy, the economic strategy and the Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training *Labour Market Trends Report* and its strategic plan.

2000-01 Branch Objectives

Co-operative and Community Economic Development

During the new fiscal year, the department will continue its core activities and undertake new initiatives that focus on the development of new co-operatives in agri-value and non-traditional areas.

- In conjunction with the co-operative sector and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, develop a comprehensive promotional and development strategy to support NGC initiatives.
- In conjunction with the Saskatchewan Region of the Canadian Co-operative Association, undertake joint initiatives for youth and NDO board training.

- Support the establishment and development of an NDO in North Battleford.
- Introduce enhancements to the NDO initiative that will enable enhanced capability for community economic development and foster greater partnerships and evaluation mechanisms for the program.
- Publish the updated study done by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives on the economic impact of co-operatives on Saskatchewan.
- Maintain liaison with the co-operative sector on government policies, programs, legislation and regulation pertaining to co-operatives, and facilitate the presentation of the co-operative sector's needs, interests and concerns.
- Promote and support co-operative sector accomplishments, and co-ordinate and support activities including the Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards Program, the Co-operative Flag-Raising Ceremony, and Co-operatives Week.
- Establish a government/co-operative sector working committee to do some preliminary planning on hosting an International Co-operatives Conference in 2005.
- Monitor legislative and regulatory changes affecting co-operatives.
- Develop and distribute additional fact sheets in the ongoing series on co-operative governance and operations.

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

The department will continue to offer the LSVCC Program and will specifically target the following objectives:

- Review LSVCC Regulations for any changes required.
- Set up all Type B LSVCCs with a run-time database data entry program.
- Establish regular reporting mechanisms and schedules for all LSVCCs.
- Audit selected LSVCCs.
- Work with Saskatchewan Finance to clarify income tax forms.
- Review and update the Type B LSVCC kit.

Business Immigration Programs

The department will continue to operate the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and also provide assistance with Citizenship and Immigration Canada's other business immigration programs. Specific attention will be paid to the following objectives:

- Develop and undertake research to identify additional critical skill shortages in Saskatchewan.
- Develop and implement an out-of-country promotion and recruitment plan to recruit immigrants to Saskatchewan.
- Develop and implement an in-province promotion plan to inform companies of the PNP.
- Establish benchmarks for processing of PNP applications.
- Conduct an evaluation of the PNP and make a recommendation on its future.
- Assist Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs to undertake consultations regarding a provincial immigration policy.
- Participate in federal-provincial working groups related to business immigration.

Small Business Loans Association Program

The department will continue to offer the SBLA Program and will focus on the following objectives:

- Develop and implement a plan to deliver the SBLA Manual/Handbook.
- Monitor non-performing loans to ensure delinquency rates remain low.
- Review and analyze loan statistics to determine effects resulting from changes to the loan limits.
- Review needs of SBLAs and small business loan clients to identify possible program enhancements.
- Continue to recognize SBLAs that have reached job creation milestones.
- Work with regional and economic development groups to establish new SBLAs.

For more information, contact:

Program Development and Support Branch
Operations Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Regional Programs:
Telephone: (306) 787-7874
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Co-operative and Community
Economic Development:
Telephone: (306) 787-0190
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Investment Services:
Telephone: (306) 787-8710
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Information Technology Office

Operating under the leadership of the Chief Information Officer for Saskatchewan, the Information Technology Office (ITO) establishes and co-ordinates policies and programs that will use information technology to enhance public access, strengthen the government's ability to undertake electronic service delivery and enable electronic commerce throughout the province.

The ITO was responsible for management of the government's Year 2000 (Y2K) Co-ordination Office. Responsibility for Y2K preparedness efforts remained with individual government departments and agencies. However, the Y2K Co-ordination Office monitored Y2K activities within government departments and agencies, identified potential problem areas and facilitated Y2K communication activities across government. With the advent of the year 2000 during the reporting year, the potential threat of Y2K-related technology problems ended, and the activities of the Y2K Co-ordination Office were wound down.

During 1999-2000, the ITO:

- laid the groundwork for development of a secure, high-speed network that will improve delivery of provincial educational and health services;
- conducted research and technical requirements for redesign of the Government of Saskatchewan central Web portal to make the site more effective in delivering information and electronic services;
- provided funding and pathfinding services for 13 on-line services in various departments/agencies, and worked with partners to develop a "payment gateway" to allow secure credit card purchases of government services;
- worked with other provincial government departments to develop an e-government strategy. and developed a government-wide information technology security charter, to ensure the security of sensitive public information;
- partnered with Statistics Canada to host a seminar to promote public and private use and development of the Internet as a service delivery tool;
- monitored and co-ordinated government response or action on key information technology issues, such as telecommunications, intellectual property rights, privacy and e-commerce;
- co-ordinated and facilitated government Y2K preparedness efforts, achieving the target of 100 per cent readiness prior to December 31, 1999;
- co-ordinated and assisted departments with the development of contingency plans in the event of unforeseen Y2K-related public service disruptions;
- co-ordinated the work of various government departments and a private sector consultant toward establishment of a geomatics strategy for government and increased involvement in the geomatics industry from the private sector.

2000-01 Objectives

- Continue to improve public access to government services by encouraging departments and agencies to explore and expand electronic service delivery using the Internet and other technologies, particularly services that involve on-line payment and electronic delivery.
- Continue to foster an environment that will lead to the expansion of electronic commerce in Saskatchewan, to strengthen government's ability to use information and information technology to enhance the efficiency of government operations, and to assist Saskatchewan citizens in adapting to a global, information-based economy.
- Co-ordinate the launch of the first phase of a secure, high-speed network to improve delivery of government education and health services.
- Develop a plan and explore funding options for a high-speed connectivity network for Saskatchewan universities and research parks.
- Finalize and facilitate adoption of an e-government strategy by all government departments and agencies.
- Establish partnerships in order to incorporate information technology and information management into departmental business processes.

For more information, contact:

Information Technology Office
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-8880
Facsimile: (306) 787-3872

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Marketing and Corporate Affairs

The Marketing and Corporate Affairs Branch is responsible for the strategic communications, promotion and marketing activities of the department. Its role is to provide leadership on communications issues and to support government marketing efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and to attract businesses, industries and investment to Saskatchewan.

The 1999-2000 goals of the branch included:

- increasing out-of-province awareness of the positive business climate and economic developments in Saskatchewan through heightened and strategically-targeted marketing efforts.
- contributing to an increased awareness and confidence within the province of Saskatchewan's economic strengths, successes and opportunities.
- promoting general awareness of provincial strategies for economic development.
- increasing understanding of the economy and the linkages between economic and social benefits.
- highlighting growth opportunities within the province's key economic sectors.
- encouraging business relationships designed to attract new businesses, and enable expansion of existing operations.
- increasing awareness of innovation as a source of economic growth.
- creating awareness of department programs and services available to assist business development.

The activity level in the branch continued to be high and involved co-ordination with private businesses, other departments and other levels of government. Activities for 1999-2000 fell into four broad areas in support of branch goals:

Creating Economic Confidence

The branch worked to develop confidence in Saskatchewan's economy by:

- producing and distributing quarterly editions of *Business Unlimited*, an insert in *Saskatchewan Business* magazine.
- publishing the monthly *Saskatchewan Economic News (SEN)* to provide news about economic indicators and significant economic development projects throughout the province.
- organizing, co-ordinating and advising on more than 70 public events to profile economic success stories in the private and public sectors.
- organizing a series of special events to promote the major expansion announced for the province's forest industry.
- writing approximately 130 speeches for the premier, minister and designates to deliver to stakeholders.
- writing more than 120 news releases and feature stories on department programs and initiatives in the private and public sectors.
- providing information and support for hundreds of media inquiries.

Image and Investment Promotion

The branch continued to promote Saskatchewan's economic renewal, growth prospects and investment opportunities among business and opinion leaders both inside and outside the province. Activities included:

- developing a major advertising campaign promoting Saskatchewan's forestry, advanced technology and agri-value sectors, using placements in Saskatchewan newspapers and out-of-province specialty/trade publications.
- conducting extensive discussions with economic development stakeholders to gather advice on and direction for the campaign.
- developing new marketing materials, such as folders, brochures and fact sheets and refreshing the look of existing materials.
- preparing feature articles and editorial material on the Saskatchewan economy and its sectors for various trade and business publications.
- providing communications support at trade shows, including the Prospectors & Developers Mining Millennium in Toronto and the Globe 2000 environmental conference in Vancouver.
- providing communications support to trade missions led by the minister and co-ordinated by the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP).
- providing background and feature stories to out-of-province specialty and trade publications.
- producing articles and feature stories for various in-province publications.

- co-ordinating promotional activities around various special weeks including Co-operatives Week, Small Business Week and REDA Week.
- handling inquiries from the public.

Supporting Department Programs and Initiatives

The branch increased awareness of department programs and initiatives through production and distribution of print materials and selective use of advertising. Staff co-ordinated design and procurement of exhibit and promotion items, and provided general support to department and ministerial participation in trade shows, trade missions and special events.

Main activities during the reporting period included:

- publishing program fact sheets and co-operative development guides, small business handouts, and other publications, including communication material on new generation co-operatives.
- providing communications and marketing support to the New Generation Co-operatives and Connectivity conferences.
- providing general marketing support for the Provincial Nominee Program, including developing materials for the Emigrate 2000 show in London, England.

Accountability and Issues Identification

A major role of the branch continued to be the identification of issues and the development strategic communications plans to address them. The branch prepared communications strategies in connection with Cabinet Decision Items (CDIs), as well as miscellaneous strategies relating to specific projects or funding involving the department. The branch also conducted polling and media monitoring to track issues pertaining to the government and the department and its programs.

During the reporting period, Communications branch:

- prepared and implemented more than a dozen communication strategies for department initiatives or programs.
- provided central communications support to the work of the government's Y2K Co-ordination Office.
- monitored newspaper clippings for stories and issues related to department programs and initiatives.
- produced the department's annual report for the 1998-99 fiscal year.
- undertook the department's "House Business" responsibilities, providing information to the Legislative Assembly in response to oral and written questions.

2000-01 Objectives

- Increase optimism and confidence, both within and outside Saskatchewan, in the province's economic opportunities.
- Promote Saskatchewan's business advances through innovation and diversification.
- Create a shared vision of a dynamic, growing province that is full of opportunity.
- Provide a framework for undertaking a co-ordinated, long-term approach to investment attraction and out-of-province marketing.
- Build public awareness of the province's economic strategy, in which government, businesses, communities and organizations work together to create jobs and economic growth.
- Build corporate understanding within government of the province's economic strategy.
- Use stakeholder relations and targeted communications on business successes to encourage optimism among Saskatchewan residents, particularly young people, about the province's opportunities and potential.
- Continue to create awareness of innovation as a source of economic growth.
- Continue to create awareness of department programs and services available to assist business development.

For more information, contact:

Marketing and Corporate Resources Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-1691
Facsimile: (306) 787-8447

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Synchrotron Branch

The Synchrotron Branch manages the Province of Saskatchewan's interest in the Canadian Light Source (CLS) Synchrotron, a $174-million science and technology facility that is being constructed on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. The national facility will be owned by the university, but managed collaboratively by the university, the provincial and federal governments and other stakeholders.

A synchrotron is an advanced materials research tool that uses a high intensity light source of infrared, ultraviolet and x-ray radiation. This light is used to probe the structure of matter and analyze physical, chemical, geological and biological processes. Canada is currently the only G7 nation without a synchrotron facility, and when built, the CLS will be Canada's sole source of synchrotron light.

The synchrotron is expected to be operational in December 2003.

The CLS will serve industrial, government and academic interests from coast to coast and will be linked initially to research investigation in four key areas:

- biotechnology, biopharmaceuticals and medicine;
- mining, natural resources and the environment;
- advanced materials and manufacturing; and
- telecommunications and information technology.

During 1999-2000, the branch worked closely with officials at the university, Western Economic Diversification Canada and other agencies in developing project parameters and structures, promoting the CLS and overseeing construction of the facility.

2000-01 Objectives

- Promote the CLS and take a lead role in facilitating the participation and investment by other stakeholders, from across the country and around the world.
- Work with other project partners to ensure that the project is being developed and managed in an efficient and effective manner.
- Develop strategies, policies and programs that link the CLS to the long-term development of key economic sectors.

For more information, contact:

Synchrotron Branch
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, SK S4P 3V7

Telephone: (306) 787-2246
Facsimile: (306) 798-0056

Corporate Affairs and Partnerships
Corporate Management Division

This division co-ordinates the work of most of the departments service areas. It has three branches: Financial and Administrative Services, Human Resources and Information System Services. The division also co-ordinates all legislative and regulatory amendments, processes Orders-in-Council and handles Freedom of Information requests.

Financial and Administrative Services

Financial and Administrative Services provides general operating, financial and legislative services to the department and to the Office of Northern Affairs. The key activities of the branch include:

- co-ordinating the preparation of the department's budget to ensure that priorities receive funding, and liaison and negotiation with Treasury Board.
- revenue and expenditure processing including appropriation control, contract administration and ensuring appropriate legislative authority for payments made.
- financial analysis and consolidation of the department's monthly expenditure forecast.
- general administrative and financial support to ensure successful implementation of department initiatives.
- providing quality and timely legislative services to the department.
- providing access to information in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Branch activities during 1999-2000 are summarized under the following broad objectives or categories:

Effective, Efficient Client Service

The branch set timelines for all measurable processes, which included supplier payment and revenue processing, quarterly reports, year-end schedules and reports, and inquiry response times. Timeline targets were met and often exceeded.

Effective Project Management to Meet Financial Targets

The branch co-ordinated and consolidated the annual department budget, ensuring that it was submitted on time. Monthly forecasts were accurately completed and submitted to Treasury Board on time. The final forecast was within one-half a percentage point of the year's actual expenditures.

The branch acquired a Windows-based budget/forecast system to replace the existing DOS fiscal forecast system. The recommended software, which will be developed and implemented in 2000-01, will provide managers with an improved tool to manage budgets and performance indicators.

The branch monitored sponsorships and loan guarantees to ensure compliance with the funding or program criteria.

Improved Service Delivery

The branch, in its continuing efforts to provide superior service delivery, reviewed other processes and where possible, implemented improvements to its service delivery.

Human Resources

Human Resources works collaboratively with managers and employees to provide proactive and leading edge human resource management strategies that support the achievement of department goals.

During fiscal 1999-2000, Human Resources:

- met out-of-scope recruitment needs on a timely basis through delegation of out-of-scope staffing to the department.
- developed action plans to respond to specific needs identified by organizational surveys.
- initiated a discussion paper for a succession plan.
- increased awareness of options available to employees to balance work and family needs.
- provided leadership to the departmental Employment Equity Committee to achieve diversity within the department.
- provided support the departmental Union/Management Committee to build stronger Union/Management partnerships.
- began revisions to the Learning and Development Framework, which will lead to the development of a departmental learning policy.

Information Systems Services

The goals of the branch are to:

- direct the planning, development, implementation and support of information technology (IT) and computer services for both the department and the Office of Northern Affairs.
- manage the department's investment in IT.

In 1999-2000, the branch:

- prepared all systems, hardware, software and peripherals for the Year 2000 (Y2K) and ensured the department and the Office of Northern Affairs were Y2K ready.
- developed an Information Technology Architecture (ITA) to align information technology with business. Also developed a framework for implementing the ITA based on the financial and human resources available for 2000-01.
- developed and implemented new databases for issuing and tracking Local Purchase Orders and IT support issues and administering the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program.
- conducted a needs analysis and purchased new budget/forecasting software as outlined in the ITA.
- developed department networking and IT infrastructure upgrade plans to accommodate the future systems resulting from the ITA.
- represented the department on government-wide committees dealing with a variety of IT issues.

2000-01 Objectives

Financial and Administrative Services

- Implement the Windows-based budget/forecast system to coincide with the implementation of the government-wide Accountability Project.
- Streamline processes by utilizing an Intranet for administrative forms and processes. Also, explore options to address managers' financial information and reporting needs.

Human Resources

- Develop ongoing performance and measurement plans.
- Provide training for managers to enable them to meet their own recruitment needs.
- In conjunction with PSC, develop assessment tools for managers to assist them in the staffing process.
- Carry out a performance management needs analysis.
- Deliver performance management training sessions in conjunction with other agencies.
- Develop and implement a departmental learning policy.
- Review a succession planning discussion paper, identify key positions and discuss an approach to replacement.
- Implement recommendations approved by Executive Management Committee to ensure effective leadership skills are in place.
- Create a positive working environment with no systemic barriers.
- Pilot a term hiring initiative and evaluate it on a quarterly basis.

Information Systems Services

- Continue with the development and implementation of an enterprise ITA.
- Implement a department Intranet for the delivery of the ITA.
- Develop an Information Technology Strategic Plan in accordance with the Accountability Project.
- Develop a department Security Policy.
- Develop a department Intranet Policy.
- Enhance and maintain departmental Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN) and applications servers to provide efficient access to resources.
- Assist in the re-development of the department's Web site.

For more information, contact:

Corporate Management Division
Saskatchewan Economic and
Co-operative Development
1919 Saskatchewan Drive
Regina, SK S4P 3V7

Financial and Administration Services
Telephone: (306) 787-1612
Facsimile: (306) 787-2198

Human Resources
Telephone: (306) 787-0798
Facsimile: (306) 798-0345

Information Systems Services
Telephone: (306) 787-2692
Facsimile: (306) 798-0056

Corporate Affairs and Partnership

Saskatchewan Business Development Office, Ottawa

The department maintains a business development office in Ottawa to increase Saskatchewan's share of the federal procurement market. The focus of the office's activity is federal major Crown projects and procurement opportunities related to them. The office also provides information on Saskatchewan to government agencies, private sector organizations and the general public, and assists Saskatchewan-based businesses in their dealings with the federal government and other agencies in the Ottawa area.

The office actively promotes Saskatchewan companies to prime contractors and sub-contractors who have won, or are in the process of bidding on, federal major Crown projects. This approach has resulted over the years in significant successes of Saskatchewan companies in job creation and maintenance, industrial diversification and global profile.

In undertaking its work, the office makes intelligent use of industrial benefits or offsets, which are federally defined and regulated conditions attached to major Crown procurements. The office works closely with department sector specialists who, in turn, work closely with industry and businesses across the province and the country.

Federal major Crown projects are typically high dollar value, in excess of $100 million, and technically complex, and have a long lead-time and life cycle. It is not inconceivable for a project to have a ten-year lag between conception and award of a contract. Saskatchewan companies normally operate at the sub-contractor level, with work flowing through agreements with the prime contracting authority. Ideally, work obtained through a major Crown project will lead to other opportunities and additional contracts, which may or may not be related to the original opportunity. The exposure to large corporations, both national and transnational, has provided visibility for Saskatchewan companies that might not otherwise have occurred.

Federal government initiatives in the peace, security and defence areas where the office will be seeking opportunities in the coming year include the Maritime Helicopter Project, the Light Utility Vehicle project, the Military Message Handling System and the Afloat Logistics Sealift Capability Project.

In addition, the Radarsat-2 project will provide opportunities in the space communications arena, and it is expected that a joint Saskatchewan/Canadian Space Agency Partnering Agreement will be put in place to focus resources on projects of common interest. Work to identify opportunities in the civilian aerospace industry will continue. The Ottawa office will also be involved in CLS Synchrotron support activities, such as awareness programs, investment attraction and research client attraction.

In recent years, the office has also played an active role in providing assistance to Saskatchewan agencies engaged in international development projects abroad. As a result of this initial activity, follow-on opportunities can be identified and passed on to the appropriate agency.

For more information, contact:

Saskatchewan Business Development Office
Suite 1306, 155 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 6L1

Telephone: (613) 232-6644
Facsimile: (613) 232-4472

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Financial Report (Budgetary Expenditure)

Appropriation and Expenditure by Subvote and Subprogram

(Shaded totals correspond to the 1999-2000 Public Accounts, Volume 2)

	Original Estimate 1999-2000 ($000's)	Revised Estimate 1999-2000 ($000's)	Actual 1999-2000 ($000's)
EC01 Administration Total	**$ 2,193**	**$ 2,453**	**$ 2,448**
EC02 Accommodation and Central Services Total	**$ 2,109**	**$ 2,109**	**$ 2,029**
Program Development and Support			
Regional Development	$ 3,508	$ 3,258	$ 3,241
Regional Economic Development Authorities and Organizations	3,200	2,940	2,742
Business Development and Investments	2,429	2,129	2,126
Marketing and Corporate Affairs	1,189	1,189	1,103
EC05 Program Development and Support	**$ 10,326**	**$ 9,516**	**$ 9,212**
Business Investment Programs			
Strategic Initiatives Fund	$ 5,925	$ 5,925	$ 5,925
Economic Partnership Agreements	3,750	2,514	652
Small Business Loans Associations	1,130	1,130	965
Concessionary Expense for Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting	—	1,236	1,236
EC07 Business Investment Programs Total	**$ 10,805**	**$ 10,805**	**$ 8,778**
EC06 Policy and Co-ordination Total	**$ 939**	**$ 1,459**	**$ 1,437**
EC13 Information Technology Office	**$ 1,186**	**$ 1,186**	**$ 1,153**
EC12 Co-operatives Directorate Total	**$ 725**	**$ 755**	**$ 747**
EC04 Tourism Saskatchewan Total	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**	**$ 6,915**
EC11 Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. Total	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**	**$ 2,591**
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation Transfers			
Investment Division Total	$ 1,503	$ 1,503	$ 1,503
Development Division Total	2,704	2,704	2,704
Loan Loss Provision	2,000	2,000	1,239
EC09 Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation	**$ 6,207**	**$ 6,207**	**$ 5,446**
Office of Northern Affairs			
Northern Programs Management	$ 1,550	$ 1,585	$ 1,569
Northern Strategy	340	340	334
Resource Policy and Program Coordination	411	386	382
Economic and Business Development Programs	955	1,255	1,255
Northern Development Fund	1,710	1,400	1,059
Northern Commercial Fish Transportation Subsidy	305	305	300
EC10 Office of Northern Affairs	**$ 5,271**	**$ 5,271**	**$ 4,899**
ECONOMIC AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	**$ 49,267**	**$ 49,267**	**$ 45,855**

Financial Report (Budgetary Expenditure)

Appropriation and Expenditure by Subvote and Subprogram

(Shaded totals correspond to the 1999-2000 Public Accounts, Volume 2)

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ECONOMIC AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	**$ 49,267**	**$ 49,267**	**$ 45,655**

Legislative Responsibilities

During the reporting period, the Minister of Economic and Co-operative Development was responsible for the following Acts:

The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993

The Act established the Department of Economic Development (department name has since changed to the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development) using standard departmental provisions and provides authority to guide, promote, co-ordinate, and implement policies, strategies and programs in support of economic development. *The Small Business Loans Association Program Regulations* are established under this Act.

The Co-operative Guarantee Act

The Act was established in the 1940s to enable the government to assist co-operatives that do not qualify for conventional loans by providing a government guarantee of loans made through an approved lender. The Co-operative Guarantee Board, established by the legislation, did not meet during the reporting year and no applications were received. There are also no outstanding loans.

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act

The Act and Regulations set the parameters for the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program, including: establishment of Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations, investment of monies, issuance of tax credits, and compliance. As well, the Act provides for the issuance of tax credits to federally-registered labour-sponsored venture capital corporations.

The Rural Development Act

The Act, which is jointly administered with Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing, provides the Minister with the authority to formulate and carry out economic and social programs that benefit persons residing in rural areas.

The Small Business Investment Incentives Act

The Act provides authority for the Small Business Investment Incentives Program, which was established to provide grants to investors for small business investments. The program is not currently active and plans are to propose the repeal of this legislation in the next fiscal year.

The Venture Capital Tax Credit Act

The Act provides authority for the Venture Capital Tax Credit Program. The program is not currently active and plans are to propose the repeal of this legislation in the next fiscal year.

The Tourism Authority Act

The Act provides for the establishment of the Saskatchewan Tourism Authority which is charged with the responsibility to facilitate: the marketing of tourism; the provision of visitor and information services; the education and training of individuals involved in the tourism industry; the planning and development of tourism destination areas; the administration of tourism funding programs (other than capital funding); research and policy development in tourism; public awareness of tourism; and the development and promotion of tourism in Saskatchewan.

Legislative Amendments

During the reporting period, the following amendments were made to legislation governed by Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development:

The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 1999

This amending legislation provided for a series of amendments including:

- removing the section that prevents individuals who redeem their Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation (LSVCC) shares in a year from claiming tax credits for the purchase of new LSVCC shares in the year of redemption and the following two years;
- removing the maximum annual limit of investment in a Type A fund from the legislation in order to move this provision to the regulations;
- allowing registered retirement income funds to hold and redeem eligible equity shares of an LSVCC;
- clarifying how remaining property of an LSVCC is distributed between different classes of shares to remove an inconsistency between *The Business Corporations Act* and *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act*;
- allowing for the de-registration of an LSVCC to be at the discretion of the Minister; and
- clarifying that ownership of incentive-based shares in an LSVCC fund can be by an eligible investor or individuals who were eligible at the time they acquired the shares.

This Act came into force on July 19, 1999.

No other legislation was introduced or repealed by the department during the reporting year.

Publications

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development distributed the following publications during the reporting year:

Economic Strategy

- *Partnership for Growth* – Progress Report Year Two (1998)
- *Partnership for Growth* – Progress Report Year One (1997)
- *Partnership for Growth* – Building on the Renewal of the Saskatchewan Economy (1996)

Economic Analysis

- Monthly Economic Indicator Report

Co-operative Development

- Continuing the Co-operative Sector and Government Partnership – A Mandate Paper
- Co-operative Development Fact Sheets (ongoing series currently with 12 titles)
- *Building the New Saskatchewan* – New Generation Co-operatives For Agricultural Processing and Value-Added Projects: A Development Guide
- The Social and Economic Importance of the Co-operative Sector in Saskatchewan (1998)
- Co-operative Development Assistance Program fact sheet

Economic Diversification

- Saskatchewan Manufacturers Guide (available on department Web site only)
- Major Projects Inventory (available only on the Web site)
- Directory of Professional Consultants in Saskatchewan (1998)
- Private Sector Purchasers (1996)

Regional Economic Development Services

- Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) White Paper
- REDA White Paper Phase II
- REDAs: Organization and Funding
- Canada/Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA) – Mandate and Criteria
- Strategic Initiatives Fund – Mandate, Criteria and Application (available on department Web site)
- Directory of Business Associations in Saskatchewan (1999)

Business Immigration Programs

- Saskatchewan Guidelines: Immigrant Entrepreneur Program
- Provincial Nominee Program – Guidelines and Fact Sheet
- Introduction to Saskatchewan Fact Sheet

Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Program

- Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations
  - LSVCC Employee Funds Type B fact sheet
  - LSVCC Pool Funds Type A fact sheet
  - LSVCC Brochure

Industry Development Program

- Small Business Loans Associations Program fact sheet

Business Services

- Business and Co-operative Information Resource Materials (84 titles)
- Kinds of Business (48 titles) – Fall 1999
- Information Bulletins (16 titles)

Investment Attraction

- Saskatchewan Success Through Innovation out-of-province marketing kit
  - Overview brochure
  - Sector-specific fact sheets – about Saskatchewan, agricultural biotechnology, agricultural equipment, call centres, cultural industries, food and crop processing, forestry, information technology, locating in Saskatchewan, mining, oil and gas, pork production, tourism.

- Saskatchewan Ambassador Program kit:
  - Sector brochures
  - Community Profiles
  - CD-ROM
  - Video
- Investors Package (available only upon request)

Other

- Department annual reports
- Saskatchewan Business Unlimited quarterly magazine (free by subscription)
- Saskatchewan Economic News monthly news summary (free by subscription)
- Blueprint for Innovation: Entering the 21st Century (report of the Saskatchewan Steering Committee on Innovation, October 1998)
- Canadian Light Source – "New Light" for Science and Innovation (1999)
- Implementation to Address Entrepreneurial Education (Fall 1997)

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Yorkton

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Yorkton, SK S3N 0H5

Saskatoon

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Saskatoon, SK S7K 2H6
206 – 15 Innovation Boulevard
Saskatoon, SK S7N 2X8

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Prince Albert, SK S6V 7P3

Office of Northern Affairs

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Northern Business Directory	1-800-663-4065
Northern Development Fund	1-800-663-4065
Northern Mines Monitoring Secretariat	1-800-577-2668
Office of Northern Affairs	(306) 425-4200
Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development Regional Offices	1-800-265-2001

Glossary of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations were used in the 1999-2000 Annual Report of Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development.

AIT	Agreement on Internal Trade
BIS	Business Information System
BREI	Business Retention and Expansion International
BSIB	Business Services Improvement Branch
CCA	Canadian Co-operative Association
CDAP	Co-operative Development Assistance Program
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation
CFI	Canada Foundation for Innovation
CLS	Canadian Light Source (synchrotron project)
CSBSC	Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre
DND	Department of National Defence
ECAS	Electrical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan
HAS	Hotels Association of Saskatchewan
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IT	Information Technology
ITO	Information Technology Office
LSVCC	Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Organization
NFTC	NATO Flying Training in Canada Project
NGC	New Generation Co-operative
NHOP	Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program
PACE	Provincial Action Committee on the Economy
PAMI	Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
R&D	Research and Development
REDA	Regional Economic Development Authority
SBLA	Small Business Loans Association
SCCD	Saskatchewan Council for Community Development
SIAST	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
SEDA	Saskatchewan Economic Developers Association
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOCO	Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
SPMC	Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation
SRC	Saskatchewan Research Council
STEM	Scanning Transmission Electron Microscope
STEP	Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership
WEPA	Western Economic Partnership Agreement
WGI	Working Group on Investments
Y2K	Year 2000